

Using the newspaper to learn about state and local government

Grade level: 3rd – 5th grade

Curriculum Connections: Social Studies, and Language Arts

Goals: Students will learn the purposes of state and local government.
Students will categorize newspaper articles into state and local issues.
Students will summarize nonfiction text.
Students will orally present a news report to the class.

Materials Needed: Newspapers, Handout, and a Bulletin Board

Day 1: Introducing the lesson

Have students work in cooperative groups and brainstorm the purpose of state and local government. Let each group share their ideas. Introduce the following primary purposes of government.

1. Protecting the health and safety of the people.
2. Providing and maintaining public services through the collection of taxes.
3. Providing for the system of justice.
4. Protecting the rights of individual citizens.
5. Promoting the common welfare of the people.

Discuss the meaning of each function.

Day 2: Divide students into small groups. Have the groups find newspaper articles that show state or local government in action. After reading the article, the students will complete a news report handout summarizing the article, identifying the type and purpose of government. Each group will report the information to the class and give reasons for their decisions. Student news reports will be classified into state and local issues on a bulletin board.

Day 3,4,5...

After teaching the purposes of state and local government, create an ongoing bulletin board. Each morning have 5 students share news reports that show their government at work. Encourage students to gather news about the government by watching the news on TV, listening to news on the radio, or reading the newspaper.

Evaluation:

Does the student classify news into state and local issues?

When given the governmental activity, can the student identify the primary purpose being served?

Does the student summarize the information in his or her own words?